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- ART. VIII. — 1. *The Works of Benjamin Franklin ; containing several Political and Historical Tracts not included in any former Edition, and many Letters, Official and Private, not hitherto published ; with Notes and a Life of the Author.* By JARED SPARKS. Boston : Hilliard, Gray, & Co. 1840. 10 vols. 8vo.
2. — *The Life of Benjamin Franklin ; containing the Autobiography, with Notes, and a Continuation.* By JARED SPARKS. Boston : Tappan & Dennet. 1844. 8vo. pp. 612.

NEARLY forty years ago, the *Edinburgh Review*, in an article upon a very imperfect edition of Dr. Franklin's works, then just published in London, made the following remarks : — " Nothing, we think, can show more clearly the singular want of literary enterprise or activity in the States of America, than that no one has yet been found, in that flourishing republic, to collect and publish the works of their only philosopher. It is not even very creditable to the liberal curiosity of the English public, that there should have been no complete edition of the writings of Dr. Franklin till the year 1806." The grounds for this reproach were partly taken away, a few years afterwards, by the publication, in London, of William Temple Franklin's edition of his grandfather's works, immediately republished in America, which was tolerably complete, though it still left much to be desired. Not till the appearance of the magnificent edition now before us, can this country be said to have done ample justice to the memory of one whom, as a patriot, statesman, philosopher, writer, and moralist, she has so much reason to honor.

It was fortunate, that the task of preparing this edition, which must supersede all others, fell into the hands of so competent a person as Mr. Sparks. He has executed the work with his usual judgment, diligence, and ability, bringing together all the materials that the most extensive research, both in Europe and America, could supply, and furnishing all the information necessary to explain or illustrate the text, without obtruding himself upon the reader's attention by discursive and useless comments. It is not often, that the patient industry requisite for the completion

of such a task is united with the extensive information, the clear judgment, and the fine taste and tact, which are needed in order to make the best use of the materials, and to put them together in the most compact and serviceable form. We find a dozen able writers with more ease than one competent editor of such extensive works as the writings of Washington and Franklin. Mr. Sparks has given the best years of his life to the preparation of the long series of volumes, which give the full expression of the life, character, and services of the two persons whose names shed the brightest lustre upon the annals of our young country; and he has reaped his reward by connecting his own reputation indissolubly with theirs. He has been, in some measure, the architect of a monument to their fame, and his own name is justly inscribed with theirs upon the base.

The writings of Franklin, if not of such preëminent and abiding importance for the history of the country as those of Washington, possess a more varied interest than the latter, and offer a wider theme for inquiry and comment. He was eminent in so many different departments of thought and action, and his works relate to so great a variety of topics, that an edition of them requires a great range of illustration, and leads to numerous branches of collateral research. The task of the editor, also, involved some peculiar difficulties. Franklin had all the generous carelessness of a great mind respecting his own reputation. He wrote and labored for particular and immediate ends, and, if these were attained, he cared comparatively little for what his contemporaries or posterity might think of his own agency in the matter. He published anonymously many pamphlets and brief essays on political topics, always to effect some special object, — to correct an erroneous impression, or to make an important statement of facts; and he showed no anxiety about collecting or claiming them afterwards. If it had not been for the zeal of a few correspondents and friends, like Benjamin Vaughan, Peter Collinson, M. Dubourg, and others, many papers of great interest would either have been lost, or never have been ascribed to him as their author. Disputes whether he was the writer of some curious essays arose in his lifetime, which he cared not to settle; and some questions of this sort remain yet undetermined, though the investigations of Mr. Sparks

have put most of them at rest. His epistolary style was remarkable for ease, grace, and humor, and many of his letters are occupied with topics of great interest; but he seldom kept copies of them, he never demanded them back from his correspondents, and the consequence is, that a great number of them are irretrievably lost. There was ample room, therefore, for the labors of an editor, not only in supplying proper elucidations of matter that had been already published, but in retrieving from obscurity and loss many valuable documents.

The researches of Mr. Sparks have been as successful, as they were laborious and extensive. Among the miscellaneous works of Franklin, he has inserted twenty-five different articles written by him, most of them quite short, which have never before been printed; and thirty-three others, which are not contained in any previous edition of his writings. He has also published two hundred and fifty-three of Franklin's letters, which had not before appeared in print, and a hundred and fifty-four others not included in any former edition. Many of these last were first published by Mr. Sparks, in a small volume printed in 1833, entitled "*The Familiar Letters of Benjamin Franklin.*" He has also inserted, in illustration of Franklin's own writings, many letters addressed to him by his various correspondents, most of which are entirely new to the public. Among these are letters from David Hume, Dr. Priestley, Richard Price, Sir Joseph Banks, and many distinguished Americans. Considering that Franklin's death took place more than half a century ago, that ever since his decease so much curiosity has been felt respecting every thing which he wrote, and that several collections of his miscellaneous writings have been made by those who, from their intimate relations with him, seemed most competent to obtain all the requisite materials, it is extraordinary that Mr. Sparks should have found so much new matter for this edition.

There is great satisfaction in the use of this collection of Franklin's works, arising from the confidence which we place in the care and fidelity of the editor, and in the extent of his historical researches. For more than half a century, the life of Franklin belongs to the history of his country; and his writings during that period, apart from their individual and intrinsic merit, have an immediate bearing on

the most important events in the annals of America. He was a prominent actor in the great struggle of the Revolution, and contributed more largely, perhaps, than any other person, to its origin, its direction, and its success. In the agitating scenes of our colonial history, which immediately preceded this great event, he was a conspicuous agent, an active and zealous supporter of the rights and interests of the Colonies. It was the work of a historian, therefore, to write his life and to edit his works. Difficult questions have come up respecting some passages in his public career, and a regard for the truth of history, no less than for the character of the individual, requires that they should be fairly and fully considered. The diligence and success with which Mr. Sparks has studied our revolutionary annals are sufficiently known, for they are attested in every page of his previous publications. We not only feel sure, therefore, that the documentary evidence brought to bear upon any point is as full and satisfactory as can be had, but the mere opinion of the editor, when not supported by direct proof, is entitled to great weight. The negative testimony of Mr. Sparks, when he says that nothing can be found to support an alleged fact, is nearly conclusive; for we are certain that the assertion is not lightly made, and what has escaped his researches may fairly be presumed not to exist. When he declares, for instance, that no evidence can be found to substantiate the grave charges and insinuations made against Dr. Franklin by Arthur Lee and others, we deem that his assertion amounts to positive proof that the criminations were calumnious and absurd. With respect to such an affair, also, as that of the "Hutchinson letters," as they were called, though some mystery still hangs about it, we are assured, after going over the ground with Mr. Sparks, that we know all that at present can be ascertained respecting it. If more light be hereafter thrown upon the matter, it must come from sources which as yet are not accessible.

This assurance rests not only upon our knowledge of the great extent and laborious character of the editor's researches, but on our respect for the soundness of his judgment, the impartiality of his views, and his conscientious devotion to the cause of historical truth. He does not write in the manner of an essayist, intent only upon rhetori-

cal display, nor with the air of a partisan, blindly defending the cause which he has hastily espoused. His taste and his principles are equally repugnant to both these methods. Patient in his investigations, cautious in assertion, and candid in summing up the results of an inquiry, he leaves the reader not only satisfied with the conclusion on which his own mind has rested, but imbued with the highest respect for the qualities of mind and heart which he has displayed in arriving at it. We know of few historians in whom the love of truth is so evidently paramount to all other considerations, nor of any inquirer who possesses higher qualifications for attaining the truth which he seeks.

The life of Dr. Franklin, which fills one of these volumes, embraces the autobiography as far as he wrote it, and a continuation up to the time of his death by Mr. Sparks. The interest of the autobiography is almost exclusively personal ; that of the continuation is chiefly historical ; and the two together give as full a view as can be desired of his private and public career. The account of the first publication of Franklin's memoir of himself is rather curious. He began to write it in 1771, and, when he was minister from the United States to France, he showed a copy of it to some of his friends in Paris, one of whom, M. Le Veillard, translated it into French. Soon after Franklin's death, this translation was published at Paris, and, after a time, was retranslated by some unknown person into English, and published in London. The imperfect copy thus filtered through two languages is the one which has been generally circulated and read, having passed through numerous editions. More than a quarter of a century elapsed from the time of its appearance, before the original work was published by William Temple Franklin, from his grandfather's manuscript. Mr. Sparks has printed the genuine copy, illustrating it by notes, and dividing it into suitable chapters for the convenience of the reader.

This work is one of the most fascinating autobiographies in English literature. There is a singular charm about it, attributable in some measure to the interest of the events and the graces of the style, but in a much higher degree to the frankness, simplicity, and completeness of the exhibition of the writer's character. It is a book both for boys and men,—an admirable picture of the pursuit of knowledge,

fame, and fortune, under difficulties, and an instructive manifestation of the workings of character, which the philosopher and the moralist need not be ashamed to study. Many years have passed since we first read it, and returned to its perusal again and again, with an interest not at all inferior to that with which every child hangs over the well thumbed pages of the standard juvenile books. Truth gradually assumes its superiority of interest over fiction, and the man returns with fresh delight to the "Life of Franklin," when he has ceased to care much about "Robinson Crusoe," or "The Pilgrim's Progress." Yet, perhaps, the book owes something of its attractiveness to the fact, that it possesses one of the most common and pleasing attributes of fiction, — that the story is carried out with what is called poetical justice. It shows the gradual, and what we instinctively consider the natural, triumph, in the affairs of this world, of those qualities of character, which we involuntarily love and respect, over those which reason and conscience alike require us to shrink from and condemn. In real life, casual and adverse circumstances interrupt, modify, and pervert what seems to be the course of justice, and we have recourse to fiction in order to find events that harmonize with the conclusions of our reason and the dictates of the moral sense. Sometimes, the reality points the moral quite as impressively as the poet or the novelist would have it; and then fact assumes the interest of fiction, and we dwell upon the incident with a pleasure which shows that it is one of rare occurrence. Usually, because our observation does not take in a range of events of sufficient extent, or because all the rewards of meritorious conduct are not of a definite and outwardly visible character, the incidents of real life seem to run counter to our expectations and our moral judgments.

Franklin wrote his memoirs in the manner of an old man having a number of his grandchildren about his knees, and telling them some pleasant story in order to enforce and illustrate his affectionate inculcation of virtuous and prudent conduct. The language is simple and graphic, the incidents are natural, and the moral is most impressively taught, though never brought obtrusively forward. The burden of the whole narrative is, that industry, temperance, and frugality lead by gradual but sure steps to the attainment of

wealth and happiness; while indolence, carelessness, and vice bring their own punishment along with them. The lesson is trite enough, and owes all its impressive character to the skill of the narrator, the minuteness with which the incidents are related, and the conviction of the reader that it is a true story. The writer keeps back nothing; he mentions his past errors and occasional lapses from virtue with the same delightful simplicity and frankness that mark the account of the more honorable portions of his life. And with what admirable distinctness and discrimination are the several characters in the little narrative brought forward, and made to play their several parts! The sketches of the able and lively, but careless and dissolute, Ralph; the idle printer, Keimer; the promise-breaking governor, Keith; and the rattling and imprudent George Webb, who ran away from the University of Oxford in order to become a printer's apprentice in Philadelphia, might all be placed beside the admirable portraits in the "*Vicar of Wakefield*." Indeed, the homely air of Franklin's narrative, and the total want of reserve in speaking of his own weaknesses and his most private concerns, often remind one strongly of the worthy vicar. The incidents connected with both his courtships and his marriage, though of quite a delicate nature, are told with perfect simplicity and fulness, and without a word of apology or comment. He shows no sensitiveness, no secret pride, no artifice, no morbid reference to self. He writes the private history not only of his actions, but of his thoughts, with as much coolness as if he were describing a merely fictitious personage. In this respect, his autobiography is without a parallel in any language. The frankness of Rousseau's "*Confessions*" is all assumed; the writer is always acting a part, and is most theatrical when he affects to be most free from artifice. The simplicity of Franklin is that of a child; it wins our love rather than commands our admiration.

Minuteness of narration, whether in fiction or in real life, has a singular charm for all readers. It is the great secret of the most successful novelists, biographers, and historians. The reader often gladly leaves the stately and gloomy pages of Tacitus, wonderful as they are for sententious philosophy and eloquent invective, to take up the homely "*long stories*" of the simple and garrulous Herodotus. The same quality

constitutes the unsurpassed excellence of Boswell in his department. Defoe and Richardson are indebted to it almost exclusively for their brilliant success. Miss Austen, — dear Miss Austen, — who never says a brilliant thing, nor paints a perfect character, — who is neither witty, nor passionate, nor eloquent, — is still minute, homelike, and true ; and by these qualities alone, she twines about the inmost fibres of her readers' hearts. It is not easy to say why these qualities are so attractive. One reason, perhaps, may be traced ultimately to the instinctive love of the human mind, especially in all exhibitions of nature, for the truth. Now, the *only* truth is the *whole* truth. The complete portrait is the only faithful portrait. The only true history or biography is that which tells all. The reality of such a narrative is the only one that is attested by our own experience, which necessarily comprehends the whole of our own thoughts, motives, and actions ; the slightest and most trivial, as well as the most important. The piecemeal exhibition of another's life finds no counterpart in our own memories, which embrace every incident in our own career. It is no more a fair portraiture of the other's character, than a few bricks are a fair specimen of a vast edifice. The simplest minds, therefore, when they wish to create an illusion, or to convince another of a fact, heap up as many details and trivial concomitant circumstances as possible, as vouchers of their veracity, though none of them have any logical connection with the main incident. Mrs. Quickly's comic enumeration of all the circumstances under which Jack Falstaff promised to marry her is a fair instance in point. In the case of children, the illusion created in this way is perfect ; and even grown persons may confess, that, if the story of Robinson Crusoe is not true, it deserves to be.

Franklin's autobiography interests us, because it tells the whole story of his life, — his good and bad qualities, his failings and errors, and even those small vices which are more humiliating to confess than great sins. He showed the strength of a great mind by keeping nothing in reserve, — by writing with a view only to the effect which his memoirs would have on the formation of the lives and characters of others, and without any regard to the opinions of posterity respecting himself. This indifference about his own reputation — one of the most striking traits of his character — is

manifested by the point at which he left the personal narrative unfinished. He traces the history of the runaway printer's apprentice down to the time when he had become a respectable mechanic, in moderate circumstances, and had even risen to the dignity of a seat in the provincial legislature. He leaves it for others to write the memoirs of the distinguished statesman and philosopher, who commanded the attention and respect of the whole civilized world.

Mr. Sparks has taken up the story, and told it to the end in a clear, full, and satisfactory manner. He has not attempted to write an essay on his genius and character, for, as he rightly observes, "in the biographical sketch, and particularly in his moral essays and correspondence, will be found a better representation of his character, and of what he accomplished, than the reader could hope to derive from any other source." Yet it may be worth while, for the sake of gaining a connected view of the genius and services of so remarkable a man, and of contemplating one or two curious questions that are naturally suggested by them, to attempt a brief sketch of the leading traits in his character. The task is a difficult one, owing to the number of spheres of action in which he became distinguished, and the variety of aspects under which his life must be contemplated. Still, his character was strongly marked, and a very unskilful limner can hardly fail to catch some of its prominent and striking features.

One of the great secrets of his remarkable success in life may be found in the perfect mastery which he possessed over his appetites and passions. This was acquired in part, perhaps, being a natural effect of his practical philosophy; but a great deal must be ascribed to original constitution. That he formed, early in life, a wise and prudent plan for the regulation of his future conduct, and almost always acted upon system and principle, was not at all extraordinary. Most young persons — at least, those who have their own way to make in the world — form such plans, and lay down wise principles to govern their subsequent career. The difficulty lies in acting up to them. Franklin succeeded in acting up to his, because he was exposed in a less degree than is usual to the action of those disturbing causes, which commonly mar the execution of the wisest purposes. From the evenness of his temper, the moderation of his aims,

and the tameness of his impulses and appetites, his excellent judgment was enabled to act without bias, and the schemes which he had formed with foresight and prudence were fully carried into effect. The lower part of his nature was kept in easy subjection to the higher, and rarely rebelled against it. As a boy, or a very young man, he was as shrewd and sagacious, as wary and calculating, as he appeared long afterwards, when he had become a gray-haired diplomatist. In boyhood, he abridged his meals, or lived upon a very simple diet, that he might save money and time for books; and this he did, not so much from the love of reading, for he never was a great student of books, but because he cared very little about a good dinner. He showed, also, that his curiosity was stronger than his lower appetites, by experimenting on the effect of an exclusively vegetable diet; and by the reformation he brought about in the London printing-office where he worked, inducing many of the workmen to follow his example in giving up the use of strong beer for water-gruel. It is worth while to mention these circumstances, though trivial, when we remember that they occurred nearly a century before any one thought of the great Temperance reformation.

The coolness of his temperament was also of great service to him in life, as it enabled him to avoid angry disputes and personal difficulties. No one was ever more severely tried in these respects. He was a prominent actor in the most agitating scenes in the history of Pennsylvania, and in the long struggle which terminated in the establishment of our national independence. He was exposed to the most violent abuse from his political opponents, and to insidious and repeated attacks from those who were embarked with him in the cause, and were his colleagues in office. But his placid temper was never ruffled into passion; he allowed no outward signs of emotion to escape him. He bore sarcasm and invective without uttering a word in reply, and often disdained to notice the most serious calumnies that were brought against him. His imperturbability on such occasions provoked his opponents to redouble their attacks, and yet he never winced nor retaliated. His political correspondence is published at great length in these volumes, and it is curious to observe how free it is from acerbity of language, and from the stains of personal abuse. We do

not mean that he was destitute of feeling ; he resented the wrongs inflicted upon his country with great warmth and earnestness. But he despised private disputes, and was able easily to avoid them, not more from principle, than from the gentleness and placidity of his nature.

Every one knows the story of Wedderburn's outrageous attack upon him before the Privy Council, in regard to the affair of the Hutchinson letters. Dr. Franklin was present, and heard it all. In his own language, "he stood there, the butt of this invective ribaldry, for near an hour ; not a single lord adverting to the impropriety and indecency of treating a public messenger in so ignominious a manner." The following are the accounts given by Dr. Priestley and Dr. Bancroft, who were also present, of Dr. Franklin's demeanour on this occasion.

"After waiting a short time," says Dr. Priestley, "the door of the Privy Council opened, and we entered the first ; when Mr. Burke took his stand behind the first chair next to the president, and I behind that next to his. When the business was opened, it was sufficiently evident, from the speech of Mr. Wedderburn, who was counsel for the governor, that the real object of the court was to insult Dr. Franklin. All this time, he stood in a corner of the room, not far from me, without the least apparent emotion.

"Mr. Dunning, who was the leading counsel on the part of the colony, was so hoarse, that he could hardly make himself heard ; and Mr. Lee, who was the second, spoke but feebly in reply ; so that Mr. Wedderburn had a complete triumph. At the sallies of his sarcastic wit, all the members of the Council, the president himself (Lord Gower) not excepted, frequently laughed outright. No person belonging to the Council behaved with decent gravity, except Lord North, who, coming late, took his stand behind the chair opposite to me.

"When the business was over, Dr. Franklin, in going out, took me by the hand in a manner that indicated some feeling. I soon followed him, and, going through the anteroom, saw Mr. Wedderburn there, surrounded by a circle of his friends and admirers. Being known to him, he stepped forward, as if to speak to me ; but I turned aside, and made what haste I could out of the place."

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"Dr. Franklin did not 'stand in a corner of the room,' " says Dr. Bancroft ; "he stood close to the fireplace, on that side

which was at the right hand of those who were looking toward the fire ; in the front of which, though at some distance, the members of the Privy Council were seated at a table. I obtained a place on the opposite side of the fireplace, a little further from the fire ; but Dr. Franklin's face was directed towards me, and I had a full, uninterrupted view of it, and his person, during the whole time in which Mr. Wedderburn spoke. The Doctor was dressed in a full dress suit of spotted Manchester velvet, and stood *conspicuously erect*, without the smallest movement of any part of his body. The muscles of his face had been previously composed, so as to afford a placid, tranquil expression of countenance, and he did not suffer the slightest alteration of it to appear during the continuance of the speech, in which he was so harshly and improperly treated. In short, to quote the words which he employed concerning himself on another occasion, he kept his 'countenance as immovable as if his features had been made of *wood*.' This was late on Saturday afternoon. I called on him in Craven Street, at an early hour on Monday morning, and, immediately after the usual salutation, he put into my hands a letter, which had just been delivered to him. It was from the postmaster-general, and informed him, that the King had no further occasion for his (Dr. Franklin's) services as deputy postmaster-general in America.

"It is a fact, that he, as Dr. Priestley mentions, signed the treaties of commerce and eventual alliance with France, in the clothes which he had worn at the Cockpit, when the preceding transaction occurred. It had been intended, as you may recollect, that these treaties should be signed on the evening of Thursday, the 5th of February ; and when Dr. Franklin had dressed himself for the day, I observed that he wore the suit in question ; which I thought the more extraordinary, as it had been laid aside for many months. This I noticed to Mr. Deane ; and soon after, when a messenger came from Versailles, with a letter from Mr. Gerard, the French plenipotentiary, stating that he was so unwell, from a cold, that he wished to defer coming to Paris to sign the treaties, until the next evening, I said to Mr. Deane, 'Let us see whether the Doctor will wear the same suit of clothes to-morrow ; if he does, I shall suspect that he is influenced by a recollection of the treatment which he received at the Cockpit.' The morrow came, and the same clothes were again worn, and the treaties signed. After which, these clothes were laid aside, and, so far as my knowledge extends, never worn afterwards. I once intimated to Dr. Franklin the suspicion which his wearing these clothes on that occasion had excited in my mind, when he smiled, without telling me whether

it was well or ill founded. I have heard him sometimes say, that he was not insensible to injuries, but that he never put himself to any trouble or inconvenience to retaliate." — *Works*, Vol. iv. pp. 451 – 454.

To the difficulties with some of his colleagues, in which Dr. Franklin was involved, while he was a commissioner at Paris, we advert now for the purpose only of quoting, in illustration of this part of our subject, Mr. Sparks's account of the manner in which he bore their attacks.

"The imputations of these gentlemen, and of some others with whom they were allied in opinions and sympathy, reiterated in letters to members of Congress, would necessarily produce a strong impression, especially as Dr. Franklin took no pains whatever to vindicate himself, or to counteract the arts of his enemies. He was not ignorant of their proceedings. The substance of their letters, which the writers seemed not to desire should be kept secret, was communicated to him by his friends. Relying on his character, and conscious of the rectitude of his course, he allowed them to waste their strength in using their own weapons, and never condescended to repel their charges or explain his conduct.

"It is interesting to see in what manner he speaks of his enemies, and of the artifices they employed to injure him. In writing to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, eighteen months after Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard began their opposition, he says: 'Congress have wisely enjoined the ministers in Europe to agree with one another. I had always resolved to have no quarrel, and have, therefore, made it a constant rule to answer no angry, affronting, or abusive letters, of which I have received many, and long ones, from Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard, who, I understand, and see indeed by the papers, have been writing liberally, or rather, illiberally, against me, to prevent, as one of them says here, any impressions my writings against them might occasion to their prejudice; but I have never before mentioned them in any of my letters.'

"He writes in a similar tone, whenever he has occasion to allude to the subject, which rarely occurs, except when his attention is called to it by his correspondents. At a date two years later than that of the above extracts, he says to Mr. Hopkinson: 'As to the friends and enemies you just mention, I have hitherto, thanks to God, had plenty of the former kind; they have been my treasure; and it has, perhaps, been no disadvantage to

me, that I have had a few of the latter. They serve to put us upon correcting the faults we have, and avoiding those we are in danger of having. They counteract the mischiefs flattery might do us, and their malicious attacks make our friends more zealous in serving us and promoting our interest. At present, I do not know more than two such enemies that I enjoy. I deserved the enmity of the latter, because I might have avoided it by paying him a compliment, which I neglected. That of the former I owe to the people of France, who happened to respect me too much and him too little; which I could bear, and he could not. They are unhappy, that they cannot make every body hate me as much as they do; and I should be so, if my friends did not love me much more than those gentlemen can possibly love one another.'” — *Life*, pp. 452 – 454.

Franklin's indifference respecting his own literary and scientific reputation, to which we have already alluded, is another illustration, quite as striking as the former, of the moderation of his desires, and the firm sovereignty of his reason over his passions. He was not insensible to the progress of his fame; far from it. He must have been more or less than man, if he had cared nothing, for instance, about the spontaneous burst of homage with which he was received at Paris, whither his reputation as a patriot and a philosopher had preceded him. The higher circles of Parisian society at that day were fond of excitement on the arrival of a distinguished stranger, and heaped their flatteries upon him with a profusion that resembled a civic triumph, but with a grace and delicacy that were peculiarly French. That staid and sober Scotchman, David Hume, who resembled Franklin in some points of genius and temperament, visited them at about the same period, and was received with an eagerness of respect and adulation, and a crowd of honors, which appeared fairly to bewilder him. The octogenarian Voltaire came also, after a long absence, and was greeted with an ovation so extravagant and uproarious, that it caused his death. Franklin came, and they seemed disposed to kill him also with kindness. His exterior was venerable and striking; he was the representative of a popular cause, the patriot statesman of a new world; and his scientific reputation was supported by one of the most brilliant discoveries of modern times. No honors were too great, no flatteries were too extravagant, for the distinguished visitor. Politicians and people of fashion, learned societies

and the mob, vied with each other in doing him homage. Pictures, busts, and prints of him were multiplied, and sold in extraordinary numbers. Medallions were made, on which his head was represented, of various sizes, suitable to be set in snuff-boxes and rings. Turgot affixed to his portrait that sublime inscription, which so happily and tersely expresses his most brilliant claims to admiration and respect: —

“*Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.*”

The French historian, Lacretelle, gives the following striking account of his reception and influence in France.

“By the effect which Franklin produced in France, one might say that he fulfilled his mission, not with a court, but with a free people. Diplomatic etiquette did not permit him often to hold interviews with the ministers, but he associated with all the distinguished personages, who directed public opinion. Men imagined they saw in him a sage of antiquity, come back to give austere lessons and generous examples to the moderns. They personified in him the republic, of which he was the representative and the legislator. They regarded his virtues as those of his countrymen, and even judged of their physiognomy by the imposing and serene traits of his own. Happy was he, who could gain admittance to see him in the house which he occupied at Passy. This venerable old man, it was said, joined to the demeanour of Phocion the spirit of Socrates. Courtiers were struck with his native dignity, and discovered in him the profound statesman. Young officers, impatient to signalize themselves in another hemisphere, came to interrogate him respecting the military condition of the Americans; and, when he spoke to them with deep concern and a manly frankness of the recent defeats, which had put his country in jeopardy, this only excited in them a more ardent desire to join and assist the republican soldiers.

“After this picture, it would be useless to trace the history of Franklin's negotiations with the court of France. His virtues and his renown negotiated for him; and, before the second year of his mission had expired, no one conceived it possible to refuse fleets and an army to the compatriots of Franklin.” — *Life*, pp. 420, 421.

Franklin received these unexpected honors with simplicity and composure, and made use of his great popularity only to further the objects of his mission. He had not sought for applause, and he knew how to value it. In his private let-

ters, he makes but slight allusion to the many civilities that were tendered him, and amused himself with describing the queer contrast which his long gray hairs, covered with a formidable fur cap that reached nearly down to his eyebrows, offered to the powdered heads which were grouped around him at Paris. By his tact, his good-nature, and his power of humorous and lively conversation, he preserved this extraordinary influence with all classes of the people; and the treaty of alliance with France, which was decisive of the success of the Americans in the contest, was brought about at so early a period by no other cause so much as by the personal reputation of Franklin as the negotiator.

"On the 20th of March, the American commissioners were introduced to the King at Versailles, and they took their place at court as the representatives of an independent power. A French historian, describing this ceremony, says of Franklin: 'He was accompanied and followed by a great number of Americans and individuals from various countries, whom curiosity had drawn together. His age, his venerable aspect, the simplicity of his dress, every thing fortunate and remarkable in the life of this American, contributed to excite public attention. The clapping of hands and other expressions of joy indicated that warmth of enthusiasm, which the French are more susceptible of than any other people, and the charm of which is enhanced to the object of it by their politeness and agreeable manners. After this audience, he crossed the court on his way to the office of the minister of foreign affairs. The multitude waited for him in the passage, and greeted him with their acclamations. He met with a similar reception wherever he appeared in Paris.' "—*Life*, pp. 436, 437.

Not less favorable to his scientific pursuits, than to his success as a diplomatist, was Franklin's generous disregard of his own fame and standing in the eyes of the public. A lively curiosity, an eye quick at observation, great sagacity in detecting the more occult relations of facts and the bearings of experiments, and a mind of incessant and intense activity, were the means that enabled him to achieve so much in science. His attention was not diverted from the object of investigation by any regard for what the world might think of the importance of that object, or of his own merit in obtaining it. The necessary experiments were instituted, not in order to convince others, but to satisfy himself. The

most brilliant results at which he arrived were communicated only in private letters to a few friends, to whom he left the care of publishing them or not, as they saw fit. His theories sat loosely upon him, and he modified or abandoned them, when further observations made it necessary, without care about the charge of inconsistency, and without shame at confessing a mistake. He was never seduced, by the accidental brilliancy or novelty of one object of inquiry, to pay more attention to it than to another, apparently of a more homely character, but, in reality, of equal interest to a philosophical mind. He studied the means of remedying smoky chimneys with as much ardor and industry as he showed in penetrating the secrets of the clouds, and robbing the thunderbolt of its terrors. He was as much gratified by the invention of a new stove, as by that of the lightning-rod. He formed theories of the earth, and projects for cleaning and lighting the streets of Philadelphia, with equal zeal; and having communicated the former in a private letter to a friend, and urged upon his fellow-citizens the adoption of the latter, he dismissed both from his mind, and pursued with fresh interest a wholly different set of investigations.

Franklin carried his disinterestedness so far, and at a period in his life when he had as yet accumulated but a small fortune, that he refused to take out a patent for his inventions, acting on the principle, which, he says, "has always weighed with me on such occasions; viz. That, as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously." Governor Thomas offered him a patent for his newly invented "Pennsylvania fireplace," or, as it was afterwards called, the "Franklin stove." He refused it, and, giving the model to a friend in Philadelphia, wrote a pamphlet describing its advantages, and it was introduced into general use. An ironmonger in London obtained a copy of this pamphlet, and, having made some insignificant changes in the machine, took out a patent for it, and acquired a small fortune by its sale. Franklin says, that this was not the only instance of patents taken out for his inventions, "which I never contested, as having no desire of profiting by patents myself, and hating disputes."

His papers on electricity, it is said, were refused a place among the Transactions of the Royal Society of London.

We are not sure, that this was the case ; but it is certain, that Franklin did not apply to have them published there, and that he had no agency whatever in bringing them at last before the public. His friend Collinson collected them, and gave them to Cave, for publication in the "Gentleman's Magazine." It was finally decided, that they should be published separately, and Dr. Fothergill wrote the preface. An extract from this preface shows in such a striking manner Franklin's indifference about the fate of these papers, the appearance of which marked one of the most important epochs in the history of modern science, that we place it before our readers.

"It may be necessary to acquaint the reader, that the following observations and experiments were not drawn up with a view to their being made public, but were communicated at different times, and most of them in letters, written on various topics, as matters only of private amusement.

"But some persons, to whom they were read, and who had themselves been conversant in electrical disquisitions, were of opinion, they contained so many curious and interesting particulars relative to this affair, that it would be doing a kind of injustice to the public, to confine them solely to the limits of a private acquaintance.

"The editor was therefore prevailed upon to commit such extracts of letters and other detached pieces as were in his hands to the press, without waiting for the ingenious author's permission so to do ; and this was done with the less hesitation, as it was apprehended the author's engagements in other affairs would scarce afford him leisure to give the public his reflections and experiments on the subject, finished with that care and precision, of which the treatise before us shows he is alike studious and capable." — *Works*, Vol. v. p. 179.

We have dwelt at some length on this forgetfulness of self, and carelessness about his own fame in the matter, when the great object in view was once obtained, as one of the remarkable traits in Franklin's character, because it seems to us to account in some degree for the prosperity of his career, and for much of his success as a scientific inquirer. Such disinterestedness is not a common virtue among scholars and men of science at the present day ; and the want of it seems to be one great reason why, with such enlarged means, such general diffusion of knowledge, and such a multitude of laborers in every department, so little that is really great and useful is

accomplished. We have much of the machinery of progress. We have observatories, and scientific associations, and expeditions of discovery, and premiums, and diplomas, and the countenance of crowned heads, and the sympathy of the public. But the results are little more than a heap of rash theories and imperfectly observed facts, and a multitude of petty squabbles about the authorship of petty discoveries. The truth is, most of the agents in the work care much more for their own reputation than they do for the interests of science ; and this complex and noisy machinery is a mere contrivance for sounding their own praise, and for catching the applause of the multitude. Admission to a learned society is prized as an honor, and not as opening the way for increased effort with enlarged means. It is sought as a reward, and not as an instrument. For, after all, great discoveries are not effected on partnership principles, and joint-stock companies are very inefficient laborers in the cause of science. The work must be done by individual effort, sustained and cheered only by hearty interest in the cause. Men may achieve an ephemeral reputation by labors directed with a view only to this reward ; but great truths can be discovered, promulgated, or enforced, and the boundaries of knowledge can be enlarged, only by self-sacrifice and disinterested toil.

This was the case in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the secrets of nature were explored with so much daring and success by a few illustrious men. Galileo, and Kepler, and Tycho Brahe labored alone, or comparatively alone, in a community among whom there were few to appreciate, and none to reward them. Privation and hardship, imprisonment and banishment, formed their only guerdon in their own age ; but they toiled on, and an immortality of fame was their final reward. We now build upon a larger basis, but the work of erection goes on all the slower. The progress is by no means commensurate with the number of hands employed, or with the quantity of materials which the labor of centuries has accumulated for their use. The reward is immediate and certain ; the applause of the public is readily bestowed for small efforts and doubtful results. And the consequence is, that the workmen look only to that reward, and not to the completion of the edifice. The industry, which might be excited by difficulties, by the want

of means and of sympathy, is superseded and extinguished by the ease with which fame and fortune fall into the lap, and the whole struggle becomes a mercenary one, — a squabble between rivals for the honor of the thing, instead of a contest among workmen for superiority in the labor achieved. Men think less about the mode of making the discovery, than about the manner of publishing it. They become sensitive, and jealous of each other, and are led to guard themselves against attack by a paltry accuracy in details, instead of a bold and comprehensive investigation of principles. A system of reciprocal puffing is contrived, and the fellows of learned and scientific associations appear as members of what has been happily called “a mutual adulation society.” One of the latest contrivances for the advancement of science in England is a grand travelling association, holding annual festivals in different parts of the country, at which noblemen deign to preside, and grave doctors and *savans* lecture in crowded theatres, upon subjects of which their vast auditory hardly understand a syllable. In regard to the meagre results obtained by such machinery, we may well look back with pride upon the signal services and pure fame of the humble, self-taught, and disinterested American mechanic.

The splendor of Franklin's discoveries as an electrician has rather cast into the shade his services in other branches of science. It was long ago remarked of the former, that they were not more valuable for the results obtained, than as lessons in the science of method, or in what may be called the logic of discovery. The close filiation of the principles and experiments, the sagacity with which the former are inferred, and the ingenuity with which the latter are contrived, the precision of the views, and the clearness with which the processes are narrated, all supply an admirable illustration of the Baconian method reduced to practice. But as the happiest specimen of these qualities, we know not that it is so proper to refer to the “Letters on Electricity,” as to the papers on the more humble subjects of smoky chimneys, Pennsylvania fireplaces, and the theory of winds and waterspouts. A child may read and understand these, and the philosopher may recur to them for a lesson in humility of purpose, and in the true science of observation and experiment. Playfair justly remarked, that the observations on chimneys, and the mode of warming

apartments, "are infinitely more original, concise, and scientific, than those of Count Rumford"; and the best test of their utility is, that they are now almost universally reduced to practice. The same distinguished and competent critic remarked, that, in these papers, "the most ingenious and profound explanations are suggested, as if they were the most natural and obvious way of accounting for the phenomena; and the author seems to value himself so little on his most important discoveries, that it is necessary to compare him with others, before we can form a just notion of his merits."

The great extent and diversified character of Franklin's scientific researches afford a striking proof of the incessant activity of his mind, when we consider that he had his own way to make in the world, that he labored long as a printer, and that a large portion of his life was absorbed by political occupations. Besides the subjects already enumerated, we find papers detailing observations, experiments, and speculations, many of them very ingenious and valuable, on meteorology, improvements in navigation, the art of swimming, stilling waves by oil, the theory of the earth, magic squares, a new alphabet, musical instruments, cold produced by evaporation, the causes of the Gulf Stream, and a multitude of other topics, which he discusses with great ardor and diligence, and without the slightest pretension. Having great quickness of vision and perception, and an inquiring habit of mind, the operations of nature afforded him a constant theme for study, and the most insignificant of them elicited original thought. The frankness and humility with which he communicated his views to others arose from his neglect of all motives, except the gratification of his curiosity, and the discovery of truth. He seems to imagine, that all his correspondents are as deeply interested in these subjects as himself, and are ready to aid him by their researches. A letter from Mr. Logan, written in 1750, before Franklin was much known, gives an amusing view of his astonishing activity of intellect. "Our Benjamin Franklin," writes Mr. Logan, "is certainly an extraordinary man; one of a singular good judgment, but of equal modesty. He is clerk of our Assembly, and there, for want of other employment, while he sat idle, he took it into his head to think of *magical squares*, in which he outdid Frenicle him-

self, who published above eighty pages in folio on that subject alone." Franklin's own mention of these arithmetical amusements of his is quite as characteristic of another trait in his disposition:—"The magical squares, how wonderful soever they may seem, are what I cannot value myself upon, but am rather ashamed to have it known I have spent any part of my time in an employment that cannot possibly be of use to myself or others."

The mass of scientific papers, on a great variety of topics, which Franklin threw off with so much ease and readiness, taking no care for their preservation, has proved a fruitful mine of hints to subsequent inquirers in the formation of their theories, and for the guidance of their researches. His pregnant observation of the fact, never before noticed, that the northeast storms along our coast always begin to leeward, and advance against the wind, together with his speculations on the cause of this phenomenon, is the basis of some of the most important discoveries of our own day in meteorology. In a recent article upon Redfield's and Espy's theories of storms,* we pointed out the manner in which their speculations were based upon this important fact. The science of geology can hardly be said to have been in being in Franklin's time. Yet, as if nothing could escape his sagacity, we find, in some speculations of his respecting the theory of the earth, — which he deemed of so little importance, that he apologized to the correspondent to whom he communicated them, for allowing himself to wander in such fanciful reveries, — distinct indications of views which have since been expanded and worked up into far reaching systems, by our most eminent men of science. One instance we will place before our readers, most of whom are probably familiar with the ingenious and beautiful theory of earthquakes, that has recently been propounded by a justly distinguished geologist in our own land. The germ of this theory, we believe, may be found in the following extract from a letter of Franklin's to the Abbé Soulavie. He has just been speaking of his hypothesis, that the interior of the earth is filled with a dense fluid, and that, as the fluid of magnetism probably exists in all space, by its influence our globe has become a particular magnet, with its poles point-

* *N. A. Review*, Vol. LVIII. p. 335.

ing constantly in the same direction. He goes on to speculate as follows.

"The globe being now become a perfect magnet, we are, perhaps, safe from any change of its axis. But we are still subject to the accidents on the surface, which are occasioned by a wave in the internal ponderous fluid; and such a wave is producible by the sudden violent explosion you mention, happening from the junction of water and fire under the earth, which not only lifts the incumbent earth that is over the explosion, but, impressing with the same force the fluid under it, creates a wave, that may run a thousand leagues, lifting, and thereby shaking, successively, all the countries under which it passes. I know not whether I have expressed myself so clearly, as not to get out of your sight in these reveries. If they occasion any new inquiries, and produce a better hypothesis, they will not be quite useless." — *Works*, Vol. vi. pp. 446, 447.

Franklin nowhere appears to greater advantage, or as deserving of higher praise, than in his labors as a philanthropist. The plain good sense and practical character of his schemes made it easy to carry them into effect, and he labored indefatigably for their success. He was never led astray by sentiment, nor blind enthusiasm, nor a false estimate of the comparative dignity and elevation of the plans by which any good was to be done to his fellow-men. The standard of utility was the only test that he applied to the schemes for ameliorating the condition of any portion of the human race; and he left it to others to preach, or to claim credit for making the proposal, while he gave his whole attention to effecting the object. No plan was too humble, no means were too laborious, if there was a reasonable prospect of accomplishing a good. He was quite as ready to suggest and execute projects for the greater convenience of his fellow-citizens in Philadelphia, — to establish, for instance, a new city watch, or a fire company, or a law for sweeping the sidewalks, — as to do his part in a society for the relief and instruction of indigent German emigrants, or in providing means of defence in the Spanish war. His adopted city owes nearly as much gratitude to him, as to its illustrious founder; a man who, in many honorable traits of character, bore a striking resemblance to Franklin. In moral sentiment and active philanthropy, in plainness of manner and real elevation of mind, in sagacious foresight and practical wis-

dom, the patriot sage of a later day loses nothing by comparison with William Penn ; while, in point of genius and originality, he was incontestably the superior.

For three of the most useful and flourishing institutions which exist in Philadelphia at the present day, the city is indebted to the wisdom and benevolence of Franklin. The Library Company, the Pennsylvania Hospital, and the University were projected and established by him, and owe all their subsequent success to his watchful care over their infancy. They form a splendid and enduring monument to his fame, and may alleviate the disappointment of the stranger, who finds, in the cemetery of Christ Church, that only a plain marble slab covers his grave. That no greater honors have been paid to his memory by the city which was made illustrious by his residence, and which has profited so largely by his philanthropy, must be ascribed to the fact, that, even after the lapse of almost a century, the jealousies and heart-burnings created by a portion of Franklin's political career have not yet entirely died out. Among the earlier contests which at length converged and produced the Revolution, was the division of parties in Pennsylvania between those who represented the interests of the Proprietaries, or the heirs of William Penn, and the body of the inhabitants. Franklin, whose sympathies were always in favor of popular rights, took sides with the multitude, and his talents and influence had a decisive effect in the contest. He thus incurred the bitter and unremitting hostility of a large, and, in many points, a very respectable party, whose descendants have inherited a portion of their prejudices, and still look with no friendly eye upon his reputation. Without going at all into the merits of the original dispute, though our opinion is decidedly in favor of the equity of the cause which he espoused, we may still suggest, that to cherish the remains of such prejudices at the present day, in the face of Franklin's preëminent services and exalted fame, is to do injury only to the persons whose breasts can harbour such disgraceful feelings. A monument should be erected to his memory in that city, if for no other purpose than to show, that its inhabitants have buried the recollection of old political hostilities in his tomb.

The question respecting Franklin's character as a moralist is more difficult than any which we have yet considered.

The individuality of the man, the striking and peculiar traits of his disposition, are most clearly seen under the moral aspect of his life and writings. His "Poor Richard" is the most original and characteristic of all his productions. It supplies the key to his autobiography; its spirit pervades all his publications; it furnishes the explanation of his career as a patriot, a philosopher, and a philanthropist; it was acted out through his whole life. Whatever may be thought of the doctrine it teaches, its merits and originality as a work of genius cannot be denied. Few works have been more widely popular, or have been productive of such extensive and permanent effects. It was eminently calculated for the immense circulation among common readers which it almost immediately obtained. Drawn up chiefly in the form of homely proverbs, unequalled for humor, for pithy and terse expression, and for direct application to the object in view, and professing to teach the way to wealth and happiness, it became the manual of every aspiring tradesman and mechanic, and the indirect means, as the maxims were repeated from mouth to mouth, of shaping the character of many who never saw it in print. The scheme of the wise man for modelling the minds and determining the destiny of a whole people, by writing its ballads rather than its laws, was surpassed by the genius of the Philadelphia printer, who made a collection of proverbs for his countrymen, and formed the national character.

We include under the general name of "Poor Richard" the whole body of prudential maxims that first appeared in the almanac of that name, which was projected, edited, and published by Franklin for many years. Most of them were collected some time afterwards, and published separately, under the title of "The Way to Wealth"; and this was the work which underwent so many translations in Europe, and obtained so great circulation and celebrity there. It has appeared in a version even into Modern Greek. Taken together with the other essays on moral and religious subjects and the economy of life, it presents a full view of what may be called the Franklinian morality. The whole should be viewed in connection with that very homely scheme of moral reformation, mentioned in the autobiography, where the principal virtues and the days of the week appear arranged in the form of a multiplication table, the object being to per-

fect the character by keeping an exact record of daily transgressions.

There is not much sentiment or enthusiasm in such a scheme. It is plain even to coarseness; it is humble almost to meanness. It is the essence of worldly wisdom, the bible of prudent conduct. The whole is a lesson given by a shrewd and sagacious old man, of benevolent impulses and even a warm heart, wary but upright, prudent but philanthropic, self-seeking but just,—a lesson given to the young mechanics and traders among his countrymen, impressing upon them the importance of integrity, industry, sobriety, and economy, as opening a sure path to success in life. It is the true manual of utilitarianism; Jeremy Bentham only borrowed and marred it. Though we may wish that it were animated with a stronger and loftier feeling, that it set forth nobler aims, that it breathed more of an earnest Christian spirit, we cannot deny its admirable adaptation to the purpose which the author had in view. The motives proposed were by no means the highest, but they were effective for the classes whom they were designed to influence. The homely and good-natured tone, the playful illustrations, the clear and pointed style, and the good sense and obvious earnestness of the writer, make these essays models of popular exhortation. The mind which would pronounce them *vulgar* is vitiated by sickly refinement. There is nothing vulgar in the attempt, however prosecuted, to make large bodies of men more honest and intelligent, more economical, sober, and industrious.

It is proper to try these essays only by an ethical standard. Whatever may have been the religious opinions of Franklin, he was not directly influenced by them, when his only object was to give prudential advice to his countrymen. Certainly there is nothing in these essays, which is offensive to Christianity, or which directly militates with its spirit. They form a practical system of utilitarian ethics. To say that this system is vastly inferior to the morality of the gospel is not at all to the purpose; as much as this must be admitted of every scheme of morals, in which the subject is viewed only by the light of nature and conscience. The ethical doctrines of Franklin must be compared with the speculations of Socrates and Cicero, of Hobbes and Hume, of Paley and Bentham, and not with the teachings of the Saviour. And

here it may be as well to remark of his religious belief, that it contained a recognition of all the truths of natural religion, including the doctrines of immortality and a future retribution, and, so far as we can perceive, a faith in the divine mission of the Saviour. It coincided in most respects with the opinions of the Unitarians of the present day ; and if religion was not as solemn and earnest a thing with him as with many of that sect, the misfortune must be ascribed in part to the coldness of his temperament.

Utility may be considered both as a test, and as a motive, or cause, in ethics. To say that all virtuous actions are also useful, and, therefore, that utility is often a very convenient criterion whereby to distinguish right from wrong, is quite a different thing from saying, that actions are right *because* they are useful, and, consequently, that utility is the very essence of virtue. No one denies the former proposition, or the propriety of adopting it as a guide to conduct, unless he be one of those blind enthusiasts, who repudiate all regard to consequences, and adopt the fanatical maxim, that we must act from moral impulse alone, and leave the results with God. The proper answer to such persons is, that, in morals, the act and its consequences are one, and we have no right to proceed upon a partial view. The deed which will ultimately be injurious to others is as wrong as that which does immediate harm ; and reason is given to us that we may take care of the future, as well as of the present. So far, therefore, as Poor Richard shows the intimate connection between virtue and well-being, so far as he proves that to be honest and true is the best mode of becoming wealthy and happy, he is a sound moralist. Nor will any great objection be made to his doctrine, if he holds up this fact as *one* of the inducements to virtuous conduct. The theory of religion, no less than of pure ethics, sanctions an appeal to man's instinctive desire of future happiness, as a motive and an incitement to an upright and holy life. This is but a preparatory step, it is true ; for that virtue is imperfect, is even mean and grovelling, which is not practised for its own sake.

That beautiful law of our mental constitution, which accounts for the formation of what are called "secondary desires," affords a means for the purification of the motive, and for a passage from the selfish to the disinterested stage

of moral progress. The process is a simple one, being merely a transference of the affections from the end to the means. By the association of ideas, that which was at first loved or practised only as an instrument, becomes the leading idea and the chief object of pursuit. Thus, in the downward course, money, which is at first desired only as a means of gratifying the appetites, or of answering still higher ends, becomes itself "an appetite and a passion," and the habit and the vice of avarice are formed. And so, in our upward progress, the honesty, which was first practised only because it was "the best policy," the worship of God, which was first paid only as the price of heaven, become at last the unbought and unselfish homage of the soul to uprightness, holiness, and truth. Virtue deserves its name only when, by long practice, it has become a fixed habit; for then only is it freed from the stain of selfishness. The terrors of the law are proclaimed to the sinner only that he may be able to overcome the first shock of the transition from sin to holiness; its promises are reserved for those only who, by patient continuance in well-doing, have become alike indifferent to the debasing fear and the debasing hope.

Only through the process which we have here attempted to explain can we account for the fact, that Franklin, after undergoing a full course of "Poor Richard" morality, became a strictly pure, upright, and benevolent man. The virtues which he cultivated and recommended because they tended to promote success in life, he came at last to love and practise for their own sake. His integrity few will venture to question; and he was a philanthropist in the broadest and most honorable meaning of the term, seeking the good of his fellow-men by methods which did as much honor to his intellect as to his heart. He was the most rational of reformers, the most sensible and judicious in adapting his precepts and plans of improvement to the circumstances and characters of those whom he addressed. It is idle to lament his want of sentiment and enthusiasm, his low and practical views of life, his appeals to humble and even selfish motives. He understood the disposition and temperament of the people for whom he wrote and labored, and aimed to influence their conduct by the means which were most likely to produce an immediate effect. He possessed in an eminent degree that shrewdness and knowledge of human nature, for

which the natives of New England are proverbial, and which the great circulation of his writings has unquestionably done much to sharpen and increase. He delighted in the use of simple and innocent artifices, by which to convert men to his purpose, and, as it were, to cheat them into doing good to themselves; and he describes the success of these little stratagems with great humor and delight. The account given in the autobiography, of the manner in which he carried through several plans for the improvement of the city and the welfare of the inhabitants, is an amusing and instructive sketch, and quite as characteristic as any thing in the work. He knew that men, taken in the mass, must often be treated like children, must be coaxed and allured into doing what is for their own good, must be trained by go-carts and leading-strings, before they can tread securely the path to virtue and happiness. The picture of a wise and benignant old man, contributing by such humble but effective means to the welfare of his fellow-men, is one which the zealot and the idealist may not dare to despise.

Franklin's views of political economy, and the science of legislation and government, were strongly tinged with the peculiarities of his mind and temperament. Though he delighted in speculation, he did not theorize with a bold aim and a comprehensive reach of intellect. He looked only to single topics, discussing measures as they were suggested, one by one, with a view to their direct influence on the prosperity of his contemporaries. He contemplated almost exclusively the existing state of things, and was led only by accident, as it were, to the examination of general principles. Not many of his speculations, therefore, in this department, will be found serviceable at the present day. His plain good sense delighted most in the familiar exposition of obvious truths, which were at variance with reigning habits and long established prejudices, and he ridiculed these last with much humor and effect. The speculations on the effects of a depreciated paper currency are not very sound, when considered in the light of theory; but they were written for a temporary purpose, and formed an ingenious defence of a system which was then necessary in the American Colonies, as the lesser of two evils. In a short paper, published in 1766, he argues very ably against the embargo on corn, and presents views respecting a pro-

vision for the support of the poor, which coincide remarkably with those of Adam Smith, that were published nine years afterwards. We give a short extract from this paper, as a specimen of Franklin's forcible and homely way of reasoning upon such subjects. It must be remembered, that the article was originally written for publication in a newspaper.

"You say, poor laborers cannot afford to buy bread at a high price, unless they had higher wages. Possibly. But how shall we farmers be able to afford our laborers higher wages, if you will not allow us to get, when we might have it, a higher price for our corn ?

"By all that I can learn, we should at least have had a guinea a quarter more, if the exportation had been allowed. And this money England would have got from foreigners.

"But, it seems, we farmers must take so much less, that the poor may have it so much cheaper.

"This operates, then, as a tax for the maintenance of the poor. A very good thing, you will say. But I ask, Why a partial tax ? why laid on us farmers only ? If it be a good thing, pray, Messieurs the Public, take your share of it, by indemnifying us a little out of your public treasury. In doing a good thing, there is both honor and pleasure ; you are welcome to your share of both.

"For my own part, I am not so well satisfied of the goodness of this thing. I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion about the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor is, not making them easy *in* poverty, but leading or driving them *out* of it. In my youth, I travelled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer. There is no country in the world where so many provisions are established for them ; so many hospitals to receive them when they are sick or lame, founded and maintained by voluntary charities ; so many almshouses for the aged of both sexes, together with a solemn general law made by the rich to subject their estates to a heavy tax for the support of the poor. Under all these obligations, are our poor modest, humble, and thankful ? And do they use their best endeavours to maintain themselves, and lighten our shoulders of this burden ? On the contrary, I affirm, that there is no country in the world in which the poor are more idle, dissolute, drunken, and inso-

lent. The day you passed that act, you took away from before their eyes the greatest of all inducements to industry, frugality, and sobriety, by giving them a dependence on somewhat else than a careful accumulation, during youth and health, for support in age or sickness.

"In short, you offered a premium for the encouragement of idleness, and you should not now wonder, that it has had its effect in the increase of poverty. Repeal that law, and you will soon see a change in their manners. *Saint Monday* and *Saint Tuesday* will soon cease to be holidays. *Six days shalt thou labor*, though one of the old commandments, long treated as out of date, will again be looked upon as a respectable precept; industry will increase, and with it plenty, among the lower people; their circumstances will mend, and more will be done for their happiness by inuring them to provide for themselves, than could be done by dividing all your estates among them." — *Works*, Vol. II. pp. 358, 359.

The literary merits of Dr. Franklin's publications are universally acknowledged. Though he received no academical instruction, and in early life did not enjoy the society of men of taste and letters, he labored on the formation of his style with great care. Fortunately, he chose Addison as his model, being accustomed to rewrite a paper of "The Spectator" from his general recollection of its contents, and then to compare his version with the original. We are not sure that this practice can be generally recommended for imitation, as it is likely to lead to a too slavish copying of another's manner. But the simplicity of Franklin's taste, the fertility of his mind, and his earnestness of purpose, guarded him against affectations and puerilities, and he did not attempt to transfuse into his own manner all the peculiarities of his model. Notwithstanding this early and diligent study of composition, the style in his productions was always made secondary to the thought. The practical and utilitarian turn of his mind prevented him from writing when he had nothing to say, and made him studious of those qualities which he had observed to be most effective in converting readers to his purpose. His compositions, therefore, do not exhibit extraordinary elegance or polish; but they are easy, pointed, and natural, abounding with happy turns of expression and felicitous illustrations. He had that frankness and *bonhomie*, which render the style a picture of the man, and which never fail to please, though they may not

instruct or convince. He was not a wit, but a humorist ; and the playfulness of his manner, coupled with his obviously benevolent intentions, leads the reader on by an irresistible charm, and steals away his assent by gaining his affections. The trifles which he wrote in Paris, for the amusement of the gay society there, show all the lightness and spirit that distinguish the people for whom they were composed. We copy a portion of the “ Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout,” as it gives an entertaining sketch of his manner of life at Paris.

“FRANKLIN. Eh ! Oh ! Eh ! What have I done to merit these cruel sufferings ?

“GOUT. Many things ; you have ate and drank too freely, and too much indulged those legs of yours in their indolence.

“FRANKLIN. Who is it that accuses me ?

“GOUT. It is I, even I, the Gout.

“FRANKLIN. What ! my enemy in person ?

“GOUT. No, not your enemy.

“FRANKLIN. I repeat it ; my enemy ; for you would not only torment my body to death, but ruin my good name ; you reproach me as a glutton and a tippler ; now all the world, that knows me, will allow that I am neither the one nor the other.

“GOUT. The world may think as it pleases ; it is always very complaisant to itself, and sometimes to its friends ; but I very well know that the quantity of meat and drink proper for a man, who takes a reasonable degree of exercise, would be too much for another, who never takes any.

“FRANKLIN. I take, — Eh ! Oh ! — as much exercise, — Eh ! — as I can, Madame Gout. You know my sedentary state, and on that account, it would seem, Madame Gout, as if you might spare me a little, seeing it is not altogether my own fault.

“GOUT. Not a jot ; your rhetoric and your politeness are thrown away ; your apology avails nothing. If your situation in life is a sedentary one, your amusements, your recreations, at least, should be active. You ought to walk or ride ; or, if the weather prevents that, play at billiards. But let us examine your course of life. While the mornings are long, and you have leisure to go abroad, what do you do ? Why, instead of gaining an appetite for breakfast, by salutary exercise, you amuse yourself with books, pamphlets, or newspapers, which commonly are not worth the reading. Yet you eat an inordinate breakfast, four dishes of tea, with cream, and one or two buttered toasts, with slices of hung beef, which I fancy are not things the most easily digested. Immediately after-

ward you sit down to write at your desk, or converse with persons who apply to you on business. Thus the time passes till one, without any kind of bodily exercise. But all this I could pardon, in regard, as you say, to your sedentary condition. But what is your practice after dinner? Walking in the beautiful gardens of those friends, with whom you have dined, would be the choice of men of sense; yours is to be fixed down to chess, where you are found engaged for two or three hours! This is your perpetual recreation, which is the least eligible of any for a sedentary man, because, instead of accelerating the motion of the fluids, the rigid attention it requires helps to retard the circulation and obstruct internal secretions. Wrapt in the speculations of this wretched game, you destroy your constitution. What can be expected from such a course of living, but a body replete with stagnant humors, ready to fall a prey to all kinds of dangerous maladies, if I, the Gout, did not occasionally bring you relief by agitating those humors, and so purifying or dissipating them? If it was in some nook or alley in Paris, deprived of walks, that you played awhile at chess after dinner, this might be excusable; but the same taste prevails with you in Passy, Auteuil, Montmartre, or Sanoy, places where there are the finest gardens and walks, a pure air, beautiful women, and most agreeable and instructive conversation; all which you might enjoy by frequenting the walks. But these are rejected for this abominable game of chess. Fie, then, Mr. Franklin! But amidst my instructions, I had almost forgot to administer my wholesome corrections; so take that twinge, — and that.

“FRANKLIN. Oh! Eh! Oh! Ohhh! As much instruction as you please, Madam Gout, and as many reproaches; but pray, Madam, a truce with your corrections!

“GOUT. No, Sir, no, — I will not abate a particle of what is so much for your good, — therefore —

“FRANKLIN. Ohhh! what a devil of a physician!

“GOUT. How ungrateful you are to say so! Is it not I who, in the character of your physician, have saved you from the palsy, dropsy, and apoplexy? one or other of which would have done for you long ago, but for me.

“FRANKLIN. I submit, and thank you for the past, but entreat the discontinuance of your visits for the future; for, in my mind, one had better die than be cured so dolefully. Permit me just to hint, that I have also not been unfriendly to *you*. I never feed physician or quack of any kind, to enter the list against you; if then you do not leave me to my repose, it may be said you are ungrateful too.

"GOUT. I can scarcely acknowledge that as any objection. As to quacks, I despise them; they may kill you, indeed, but cannot injure me. And as to regular physicians, they are at last convinced, that the gout, in such a subject as you are, is no disease, but a remedy; and wherefore cure a remedy? — but to our business, — there.

"FRANKLIN. Oh! Oh! — for Heaven's sake, leave me; and I promise faithfully never more to play at chess, but to take exercise daily, and live temperately.

"GOUT. I know you too well. You promise fair; but, after a few months of good health, you will return to your old habits; your fine promises will be forgotten, like the forms of the last year's clouds. Let us then finish the account, and I will go. But I leave you with an assurance of visiting you again at a proper time and place; for my object is your good, and you are sensible now that I am your *real friend*." — *Works*, Vol. II. pp. 194 – 201.

We have no room for extracts from his letters, which present some of the finest models of epistolary composition in the English language. It is difficult to say which are deserving of most admiration, those written to his intimate friends on the ordinary topics of social intercourse, or his business correspondence with politicians and philosophers. Plesantry, in the former, is sometimes carried a little too far; but they abound with indications of the good sense and ingenuity of the writer, and show a truly affectionate spirit towards his friends. The ease and simplicity of the language are admirable, and a sunny cheerfulness overspreads them, which keeps the reader in constant good-humor. The same traits appear, to some extent, in his political correspondence; but the earnestness and deep feeling of the writer are here more apparent. His attachment to his native land was so strong, that injuries inflicted upon it drew from him indignant and bitter comments, which were never elicited by wrongs done to himself. His confidential letters to David Hartley, who was for a time an unrecognized medium of communication between him and the English ministry, have some energetic passages, in which the vituperation is carried to the utmost point that is consistent with dignity. His firmness and resolution during the darkest periods of the American war are remarkable. After the Declaration, though he was made the organ of several attempts at a reconciliation, he seems hardly to contemplate the possibility

of the struggle terminating on any other terms than an acknowledgment of the entire independence of this country. His reply to a secret agent of England, who wrote to him in 1778, under the name of Charles de Weissenstein, sounding him about terms for peace, contains such an emphatic expression of the determination with which the writer had embarked in the cause, though he has been accused of lukewarmness in it, that we cannot resist the temptation to quote from it two short paragraphs. It must be remembered, that Franklin wrote it soon after he had received accounts of the gloomy winter passed by the American army at Valley Forge.

“You conjure me, in the name of the omniscient and just God, before whom I must appear, and by my hopes of future fame, to consider if some expedient cannot be found to put a stop to the desolation of America, and prevent the miseries of a general war. As I am conscious of having taken every step in my power to prevent the breach, and no one to widen it, I can appear cheerfully before that God, fearing nothing from his justice in this particular, though I have much occasion for his mercy in many others. As to my future fame, I am content to rest it on my past and present conduct, without seeking an addition to it in the crooked, dark paths you propose to me, where I should most certainly lose it. This, your solemn address, would therefore have been more properly made to your sovereign and his venal Parliament. He and they, who wickedly began, and madly continue, a war for the desolation of America, are alone accountable for the consequences.

“You think we flatter ourselves, and are deceived into an opinion, that England *must* acknowledge our independency. We, on the other hand, think you flatter yourselves, in imagining such an acknowledgment a vast boon, which we strongly desire, and which you may gain some great advantage by granting or withholding. We have never asked it of you; we only tell you, that you can have no treaty with us but as an independent state; and you may please yourselves and your children with the rattle of your right to govern us, as long as you have done with that of your king's being king of France, without giving us the least concern, if you do not attempt to exercise it. That this pretended right is indisputable, as you say, we utterly deny. Your Parliament never had a right to govern us, and your king has forfeited it by his bloody tyranny. But I thank you for letting me know a little of your mind, that, even if the Parliament should acknowledge our independency, the act would not be

binding to posterity, and that your nation would resume and prosecute the claim, as soon as they found it convenient, from the influence of your passions, and your present malice against us. We suspected before, that you would not be actually bound by your conciliatory acts, longer than till they had served their purpose of inducing us to disband our forces; but we were not certain that you were knaves by principle, and that we ought not to have the least confidence in your offers, promises, or treaties, though confirmed by Parliament."— *Works*, Vol. VIII. pp. 279–283.

Of the extent and general character of Franklin's political services to this country, it would be difficult to speak fairly, without appearing to run into the language of excessive panegyric. His services in England, up to the commencement of the war, and in France, through nearly the whole of its continuance, were worth more than triumphant battles, or the capture of invading armies, to the cause. On his discretion and good faith, his judgment and activity, and the immense influence which was acquired by his great personal reputation, depended mainly the hopes of the Americans for sympathy and assistance from Europe. Never was there a more important trust, and never were expectations more fully answered. He went to England, in 1757, as the agent of Pennsylvania, appointed to present and support the petition of the Assembly of that province against the arbitrary and oppressive conduct of the Proprietaries. Franklin had long been the champion of this popular body, and had drafted most of the papers which emanated from it, in the course of the dispute. The opposite party dreaded his talents and influence, and made very favorable overtures, to draw him over to their side. But he steadfastly refused, and, in his own language, "was as active as ever in the opposition." During this visit to England, which continued for five years, he labored indefatigably in the service of the province, and contributed freely to the press, in order to remove the misapprehensions and prejudices which existed there respecting the conduct of the Pennsylvanians.

Among other works, he published the celebrated "*Historical Review of Pennsylvania* "; a volume of considerable size, the object of which was, to expose the injuries that the inhabitants had suffered, and to vindicate them from the charges made by their opponents. It was a controversial

publication, not aspiring to the fulness and impartiality of history, but written with great ability and vigor, as a plea in behalf of the popular party. He was universally supposed to be the sole author of it, and was much abused for it by the friends of the Proprietaries, both in England and America. With his usual disregard of self, and indifference about personal calumny, he never publicly disavowed it, and therefore, till the appearance of this edition, it was always attributed to him. But Mr. Sparks has discovered a private letter, which he wrote to David Hume, soon after the publication of the work, in which he expressly disclaims it, saying that the greater part of it was written by another hand. It is properly inserted in this edition, however, as many of the messages and reports of the Assembly, which he wrote when at home, are inserted in it, and as he probably revised the whole, and was certainly responsible for its publication. It is good evidence of the extent and success of Mr. Sparks's researches, that he has been able to put at rest the question respecting the authorship of this work, so long after it was first given to the public.

Franklin returned from England in 1762, and went thither again, on the same service, in 1764. Notwithstanding his eminent services and reputation, the party of the Proprietaries in Philadelphia had contrived to defeat his reelection to the Assembly, by about twenty-five votes out of four thousand. But they gained nothing by this effort; for, as their opponents still had a great majority in the Assembly, they appointed him special agent to Great Britain, to take charge of the petition for a change of government, and to have the general management of the affairs of the province. His adversaries, among whom we are sorry to find the name of John Dickinson, murmured loudly at this appointment, on the ostensible ground, that he was not in favor either with the ministers or the Proprietaries. Of course, this fact only endeared him the more to the mass of the people, whose interests and feelings he represented.

He went to England this time as the agent of but one province; but affairs were in progress, which soon compelled him to assume a broader sphere of duty, and he became at last the virtual representative of the whole American people. He was successively appointed agent for Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts; and his great reputation, and

acknowledged familiarity with the affairs and opinions of the colonists, caused all parties in London to apply to him for information and counsel. The Stamp Act was passed, and when the determined opposition to it in America compelled the ministry to think of repealing it, his memorable examination at the bar of the House of Commons took place. It was a noble occasion for the display of his courage, his judgment, his intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the country, and his patriotism ; and nobly did he acquit himself. He was examined in presence of a full House, and was obliged to answer the questions as fast as they were propounded, without having time to consider and prepare a deliberate reply. Every word that he uttered has been preserved, and the record affords a striking proof of the clearness and vigor of his unpremeditated composition, and of the firmness and the self-possession which enabled him to display his judgment and his great store of information with such impressive effect. The ablest speeches of Chatham and Burke did not contribute so much towards convincing the Parliament and the nation of the injustice and impolicy of their conduct towards America, as did the firm demeanour and the unstudied replies of the agent for Pennsylvania.

As the sky darkened, and the danger of a division of the British empire became more imminent, the influence and the reputation of Franklin increased, and all eyes were turned upon him, as the only person who was capable of mediating between the angry parties. As prudent and sagacious as he was patriotic, he shrunk from the evils necessarily consequent upon separation and war, and exerted himself to the utmost to avert such calamities. He deplored the conduct of the ministry, and wrote home, with great earnestness, to allay the over-zealous and imprudent spirit which animated some of the patriots. His letters were full of grief and anxiety ; but they manifested no failure of purpose, no shrinking from the resolution once formed, and so often proclaimed, never to submit to the unjust tax. The government had recourse to him, and plans for reconciling all difficulties were repeatedly proposed, and discussed by him in a spirit of caution and forbearance, eager to avert from both countries the horrors of a civil war. It was all in vain. The insolent bearing of the ministry, and the fatal obstinacy of the king, now known to be the chief cause why matters were brought to such a crisis, overpowered all the efforts of

the friends of peace ; and the blow was struck at Lexington, which rendered the dismemberment of the empire inevitable. Yet the endeavours of Franklin to prevent the affair from being pushed to this extremity were not entirely fruitless. His reluctance and delay showed the conscientious character of the motives with which he entered into the contest. To the mingled moderation and firmness, the prudence, equity, and wisdom of Franklin, and of men like him, was the American Revolution indebted for that appearance of dignity and soberness, by which it was characterized in a greater degree than was any other momentous political convulsion which the world has ever witnessed. It was not the turbulent rebellion of a mob, nor yet a wild and fearful outbreak, upheaving the very foundations of order, society, and morals, like the revolution in France. It was rather the grave and dispassionate act of a whole nation, upon sufficient cause, and with due consideration, severing the political ties which bound it to another, but preserving its own government and institutions intact.

When the die was cast, and the tocsin of war was sounded, the cheerfulness of Franklin instantly returned. Though he had done all he could to avert the struggle, he doubted not its issue. It might be protracted, it was sure to be calamitous in many of its attendant circumstances, and to task to the utmost the resources and the fortitude of his countrymen ; but he knew it must end in the establishment of their freedom. The solemn and resolute tone of the letter we have already cited, though it was written some years afterwards, shows his confidence, and the composure of his feelings at this crisis. As a farther illustration of his steadiness and decision of purpose at this period, we make a short extract from a letter which he wrote to Lord Howe, in June, 1776.

“ I have not the vanity, my Lord, to think of intimidating, by thus predicting the effects of this war ; for I know it will, in England, have the fate of all my former predictions, not to be believed till the event shall verify it.

“ Long did I endeavour, with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, to preserve from breaking that fine and noble China vase, the British empire ; for I knew, that, being once broken, the separate parts could not retain even their share of the strength or value that existed in the whole, and that a perfect reunion of those parts could scarce ever be hoped for. Your Lordship may possibly remember the tears of joy that wet my cheek, when, at

your good sister's, in London, you once gave me expectations that a reconciliation might soon take place. I had the misfortune to find those expectations disappointed, and to be treated as the cause of the mischief I was laboring to prevent. My consolation, under that groundless and malevolent treatment, was, that I retained the friendship of many wise and good men in that country, and, among the rest, some share in the regard of Lord Howe.

"The well-founded esteem, and, permit me to say, affection, which I shall always have for your Lordship, makes it painful to me to see you engaged in conducting a war, the great ground of which, as expressed in your letter, is 'the necessity of preventing the American trade from passing into foreign channels.' To me it seems, that neither the obtaining nor retaining of any trade, how valuable soever, is an object for which men may justly spill each other's blood; that the true and sure means of extending and securing commerce is the goodness and cheapness of commodities; and that the profit of no trade can ever be equal to the expense of compelling it, and of holding it, by fleets and armies.

"I consider this war against us, therefore, as both unjust and unwise; and I am persuaded, that cool, dispassionate posterity will condemn to infamy those who advised it; and that even success will not save from some degree of dishonor those who voluntarily engaged to conduct it. I know, your great motive in coming hither was the hope of being instrumental in a reconciliation; and I believe, when you find *that* impossible, on any terms given you to propose, you will relinquish so odious a command, and return to a more honorable private station."—*Works*, Vol. v. pp. 101, 102.

He returned to America just in time to be chosen a member of Congress, to be appointed on the committee for drafting the Declaration of Independence, and to affix his name to that instrument, the charter of liberties to a new world. Then he was sent abroad again, to the most responsible post, except the chief command of her armies, which his country had to offer; and we have seen with what a burst of enthusiasm he was welcomed in the courtly circles of Paris. He remained there, unwearied and most successful in his efforts to conduct the war to a happy termination. He remained till he had negotiated and signed the treaty of alliance with France, which was virtually decisive of the contest, and to the definitive treaty of peace with Great Britain, which marked its triumphant close.

Then he returned for the last time to his native land, to die there. He landed at Philadelphia on the 14th of September, 1785, in the eightieth year of his age. Sixty-three years before, he had landed at the same spot, on his first visit to the city, as a runaway apprentice from Boston, with a single dollar in his pocket. He came now full of years and honors, and greeted with acclamations by a large concourse of the inhabitants, to find his last resting-place within his adopted city.

Immediately after his arrival, he was chosen President of the State, and held that office by a unanimous vote at the successive elections for three years, being the full term that was allowed by the constitution of Pennsylvania. The infirmities of years were upon him, but his mental faculties were unimpaired, and he discharged all the duties of the station to the full satisfaction of those who elected him. He was chosen one of the delegates to the Convention for forming the constitution of the United States, as if that he might have a share in every important step for establishing the interests of the new republic ; and he entered into the proceedings with great activity and interest, many of his speeches being afterwards written out and published. The last speech which he made in the Convention affords such striking evidence of his liberality of opinion and practical wisdom, that we quote the concluding portion of it. Would that more of the spirit which animates it might appear in the actions of politicians at the present day !

“ I consent to this constitution, because I expect no better, and because I am not sure that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its *errors* I sacrifice to the public good. I have never whispered a syllable of them abroad. Within these walls they were born, and here they shall die. If every one of us, in returning to our constituents, were to report the objections he has had to it, and endeavour to gain partisans in support of them, we might prevent its being generally received, and thereby lose all the salutary effects and great advantages resulting naturally in our favor among foreign nations, as well as among ourselves, from our real or apparent unanimity. Much of the strength and efficiency of any government, in procuring and securing happiness to the people, depends on *opinion*, on the general opinion of the goodness of that government, as well as of the wisdom and integrity of its governors. I hope, there-

fore, for our own sakes, as a part of the people, and for the sake of our posterity, that we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this constitution, wherever our influence may extend, and turn our future thoughts and endeavours to the means of having it *well administered*. On the whole, Sir, I cannot help expressing a wish, that every member of the convention, who may still have objections to it, would with me on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility, and, to make *manifest* our *unanimity*, put his name to this instrument."—*Life*, pp. 518, 519.

He was now in the full enjoyment of a serene and happy old age, looking forward with pleasure, but without impatience, to the termination of his career. He had the same cheerful activity of mind, the same interest in philosophical subjects, which he had manifested in the whole preceding portion of his long life. He was at ease in his domestic circumstances, and was surrounded by a happy family of grandchildren, and a circle of intimate and admiring friends. His correspondence was still extensive, and some of the most admirable letters that ever came from his pen, showing all his characteristic gayety, benevolence, and inquiring habit of mind, were written at this period. A stranger visited him in the summer of 1787, and found him in the open air, seated under a large mulberry-tree in his garden, with a small party of friends around him. He conversed with his usual cheerfulness and animation, and showed with great interest some curious objects of natural history, and a large work upon botany, which he was then studying with much ardor. The sickness of death came upon him, but did not impair his serenity of mind, or the activity of his moral and intellectual powers. "A few days before he died, he rose from his bed, and begged that it might be made up for him, '*so that he might die in a decent manner.*' His daughter told him, that she hoped he would recover, and live many years longer. He calmly replied, '*I hope not.*'" He died on the 17th of April, 1790, at the age of eighty-four years, leaving a reputation, as a diplomatist, philosopher, and philanthropist, inferior to none which belongs to the history of the eighteenth century, and as a statesman and a patriot, second only to him whose name is always first in the hearts of his American countrymen.